

## Women's Department.

## A DISCUSSION BY SOROSIS.

Marion Harland and Other Bright Women Discuss the Pros and Cons of City Life.

At a New Year's party presented to Sorosis recently by one of the Club the following question was argued:

Resolved that modern city life is unfavorable to the formation of true homes, and does not elevate the character of either men or women.

In presenting the question Mrs. Thomas said: "The argument is not intended simply to institute a comparison of the advantages of city or country life. God made the country and man made the town. Yes, and he didn't waste much time about it, either. Having made the town, man as a rule clings to it. He loves such crowds as we have here in New York, and failing this, he makes an effort to content himself in small and quiet places like Chicago or St. Louis. The homes of our nation are the foundation stones upon which it rests. It is within the province of the glimmering stream of society but I am not out of hearing of the wash of the sacred tide, ceaseless as the mean of the still-voiced Bernadettes. The engagements of a devotee of society would tax the endurance of a Hercules. Many of our best people receive even on Sunday, I am told, it is so domestic, for the husbands and sons can be at home.

"Where are they on week days?" I asked. "Why—out, where everybody else is." "Children's balls kept up until the small hours, where infants are easily lured are encouraged to eat indigestible food, lisp fashionable small talk, and waltz in hot rooms until brain and heart are heated by premature follies and passions, ought to be prohibited by the S. P. C. K. and the juvenile society, which is the grave of a baby in full dress is well as a pious spectacle as a grandmother's rugged and decrepit, and both barbaric exhibitions are distressingly familiar to people who still maintain homes in which they live.

"I know of no organization of immortal men and women in civilized lands except the fashionists that aims at absolutely nothing and yet there every time. Our American citizen is the best-run business man in the world. A home of the right sort represents to him the drier dock into which the battered bulk puts for repairs. When he endows his reluctant personality with evening raiment and trains his jaded visage into a society grimace, where the infant in hood than his spouse will ever suspect. When he strikes evening functions, but insists that his wife shall attend, there is always the club where other evicted citizens congregate and are consoled.

"A darker chapter treats of the burdens bound upon the breadwinner of the household when the appearance of wealth and fashion must be kept up on inadequate means. What shall we declaim against ambition that foregoes the comforts of judicious expenditure of a moderate income would afford that spurs the holy quest of domestic joys that neglects the culture of heart and soul to seem rich. This it is that crowds our counting rooms with bankrupts, our prisons with defaulters, and turns our places of fashionable resort into caricatures of foreign courts, foreign manners and foreign vices. It is not a matter for marvel that in just retribution there should overtake us every half decade a panic earthquake to shake us to our senses."

Mrs. A. M. Palmer, in supporting the negative, pronounced the conditions of modern country life as less idyllic than had been pictured in song and story. She spoke of the tendency of country boys of talent to gravitate toward the great cities, leaving the villages to the possession of the idle and uncultured; of the few means of cultivation available in small towns, of the idle gossip which furnishes the topics of conversation, of the time wasted in "neighboring," and the deplorable lack of worthy impetus to ambition in young men and women as compared with the advantages of the city in its libraries and galleries, its educational opportunities, and contact with brilliant minds.

"The city woman, like her home," she added, "is too often misinterpreted and misrepresented. She is spoken of as a miscreant, given over to dress and dissipation. Yet there are busy workers among them, careful guardians of their children, faithful dispensers of charity, steady workers for the advancement of humanity, giving liberally of the good things of the spirit and mental which home life has given to them, the light and center of homes. It has been a sad to scoff at the fashionable city woman and paint her as oblivious to home duties. Yet many a leader in society goes to the ball with the kisses of her babies warm on her lips, and spends her morning hours with her children. These women do not obtrude their work upon the world, but their watchful love guards every avenue where evil might enter, and cherishes every impulse for good in their children, in whom are cultured self-denial and benevolence, generosity

and tenderness, all the virtues that are fostered only in homes where mother love rules."

Mrs. Morrill in support of the negative said: "There is in the first clause of our question the qualifying word 'modern,' indicating that life in the city to-day is different from that of days past. Twenty years ago all women in New York were busied only in affairs of home and society. To-day the business and professional women number 20,000. Clubs and societies include almost as great a number. Thus a force nearly 40,000 strong have entered into the life of the city 40,000 women can revolutionize almost anything. Is woman any less gentle and womanly, less sympathetic and companionable in the home because she has looked beyond the boundaries set off by conventionality? One argument advanced against city life is the lack of time. We have all the time there is, and women of affairs learn more in a week than women of the country learn in a month. It isn't the amount of time you have. It is what you do with it. Men in the past century have time. That is their great grievance against the world. The human soul finds what it seeks always. Water will drown you, fire burn you, learning make you mad. So will city life degrade you, if you let it; but it can help you to make your home all that you will have it, a place where your highest possibilities may be realized, where your sons and daughters grow up to be strong men and women, and learn to be good fathers and mothers. Maternity is an instinct—paternity is an education. Modern city life is what it is because of the all pervading influence of woman. Then it must favor the formation of homes and the elevation of all who want to be elevated."

"Except for the home," said Mrs. Ostrum, "we would have no country, no grand America, no smaller, but no England. In the formation of the home you can't get outside the idea of the men and women who make the home. In the home are bred all the virtues—honesty, patience, forbearance, unselfishness. Now with the demands of modern city life, which take us so much from home, how are we to find time for the cultivation of those virtues? It is not only society, but, if Sorosis will pardon our societies that take us out of the home. Women do not give up duties their mothers knew, yet every woman does 500 things her mother never dreamed of doing."

"We know our furnace heated houses kill our plants and flowers. If we open a window to give them a breath of air the delicate things freeze. How about the furnace heat of the city life upon our souls, the high pressure, the rush and strain?" Mrs. Elizabeth Chapman said that the Sorosis women who had just advocated the detrimental effects of city influences in the home were in themselves living refutations of their arguments. That to one disposed to self-development city life afforded greater opportunity for uninterrupted work through its established conventionalities, and that the attrition of mind against mind conducted to higher culture. "Country people are egoists. They feel their superiority above those inferior to them until they finally consider themselves superior to all mankind. They come to the city and find their level; learn how much they do not know. Our streets are universities. We are better educated from our contact and comparison with other people."

"Then there is another feature, the education of the heart. It is fashionable to be benevolent. Every fashionable woman has her pet charity, and because she must interest other people in it to have it succeed, she is ready to be generous toward other people's beneficences in return. "We are all of us better than we want to be on account of public sentiment, which tends toward righteousness."

"We all do more good than we mean to because of the observation and influence of those with whom we come in contact. "I know we all have too many engagements, know too many people. We have a ceremony of introduction, and we sometimes wish we had a ceremony of disintroduction, but so society society people are not altogether so worrisome as we hear."

"And, besides, did you ever notice that it is always city people who write the charming books, say the lovely things of the country? It was a country woman that said in reply to her city boarder's delight at the morning rays of the birds, 'Well, if you had as much to do mornings as I do, you wouldn't have time to listen to the yawping of them birds.'"

Dr. Mary Allen's idea of the home and woman's duty as a home maker formed a fitting climax to the succession of interesting theories advanced on both sides of the question. "We are passing through a crisis in the evolution of the idea of woman's duty in the home," she said. "Twenty-five years ago woman was called the queen of the home, but she was really little more than an upper servant superintending the cooking and attending to the matter of buttons and darning. "Now the transition in the ideal of woman's duty is producing chaotic conditions. But it is the fermentation which clarifies, the disorder of house cleaning that involves the promise of order. "Woman has seen that she has something to do besides sit down in her rose garden of comfort. She has found that her own children are not safe while those of others are unsheltered. You can shut out Mike Flynn who begs at the doorway; you can't shut out Mike Robe, who comes in through the cellar. The child of the rich man is not safe when the child of the poor man has the fever. "The pretty girl who is born in poverty and bred in sin lays her hand on your son's arm and teaches him all that you have saved him from. The sons and daughters of the Christian homes are not safe because the sons and daughters of the slums are not safe. "In the old days it didn't take a long time to find out that he knew

more than his mother. The time must come when a boy can't say: 'What do you know about that?—you are only a woman,' but rather 'You do know because you are a woman.' Mothers must know, by actual contact with all phases of life, how to teach their sons and daughters in the city to-day is different from that of days past. Twenty years ago all women in New York were busied only in affairs of home and society. To-day the business and professional women number 20,000. Clubs and societies include almost as great a number. Thus a force nearly 40,000 strong have entered into the life of the city 40,000 women can revolutionize almost anything. Is woman any less gentle and womanly, less sympathetic and companionable in the home because she has looked beyond the boundaries set off by conventionality? One argument advanced against city life is the lack of time. We have all the time there is, and women of affairs learn more in a week than women of the country learn in a month. It isn't the amount of time you have. It is what you do with it. Men in the past century have time. That is their great grievance against the world. The human soul finds what it seeks always. Water will drown you, fire burn you, learning make you mad. So will city life degrade you, if you let it; but it can help you to make your home all that you will have it, a place where your highest possibilities may be realized, where your sons and daughters grow up to be strong men and women, and learn to be good fathers and mothers. Maternity is an instinct—paternity is an education. Modern city life is what it is because of the all pervading influence of woman. Then it must favor the formation of homes and the elevation of all who want to be elevated."

An Eminent Politician. How any one should ever desire to become an eminent politician passes one's comprehension. It is amazing. He is everybody's slave. He is the slave of his party, he is the slave of the wire pullers, he is the slave of the press, he is the slave of the great British public. Let him refuse obedience to any one of his owners, and before he can say Jack Robinson he is out of the running, smashed, done for. We are told from the house-tops that the great Mr. Blank is going to make a declaration of his policy—his policy, mind. I doubt if the great Mr. Blank has very much to do with the declaration. It is the party which wants the policy; it is the wire pullers who inform him that the moment is opportune for its declaration; it is the press which has warned him of the direction in which the wind is blowing. It is the great British public from which he receives the doctrine, hot pressed, cut and dried, which he is to preach. One may venture to doubt if he ever had a policy which he could legitimately call his own. He would scarcely be the great Mr. Blank if he had.

It is the rank and file of the party who have policies, ideas, theories of their own. The great Mr. Blank is like sponges. They are sponged with moisture which they receive from every side. It is rained on them from a thousand waterpots. This mixture of all the rains of all the heavens, when squeezed out by their several proprietors, drop by drop, is called their policy. Surely an eminent, a truly eminent, politician is the most wonderful work of man.—All the Year Round.

The Matter of Car Fares. Speaking of embarrassment in the matter of car fares when a male friend going the same way as yourself is encountered en route to bridge or ferry, a woman says: "I really wish there was an inviolable rule, as there is among Englishmen. I remember soon after my arrival in England happening to meet as I was boarding an omnibus an English friend, to whose house I was bound at the moment by appointment with his wife. He was a reserved and distant man, though scrupulously courteous, and I wondered whether I ought or ought not to offer to pay my fare through the three changes of transportation we must make to reach our destination. "All doubt, however, was quickly removed by the cause himself, who leaned over, after finding his own coin, with the inquiry, 'Got your tuppence ready?' I found over there that even when a man was taking you about by invitation car fares, etc., were to be individually looked after. I wish the matter were so absolutely fixed here."

It would seem as if the question is readily settled in a doubtful case by leaving it to the man. Part of the matter is disposed of absolutely. No man in America would think of asking to escort a woman on a trip about the city without assuring all its expenses. In the matter of a chance encounter there can be no harm in making the effort to pay one's fare, which, if the man prefers to do, may be permitted without protest.—Her Point of View in New York Times.

The Heart of England. In the midst of the old city of London, where the heart of human life is fastest, stands the church of St. Swithun's, an old edifice rebuilt by Wren upon its ancient foundations, but recently reduced by modern taste to a most commonplace air of comfort and newness. If the curious traveler will step out of the passing throng and edge his way through the hucksters of flowers and state fruit squatted around the church, he will find imbedded in the bluish slabs of its foundation a large oblong stone as gray as the beard of Time himself.

This is London stone, erected by the Romans half a century before the birth of the Saviour as the central milestone or point of their positions in Britain. From it all roads, divisions of property and distances throughout the province were measured. It has been recognized as the heart of England, from which all its arteries flowed, "by every historian, dramatist or antiquary known to English literature."

A feeling has always existed among Englishmen about this stone which was not altogether superstition, that, as all distances were reckoned from it, so it was in a certain way the base of the stability of England.—Youth's Companion.

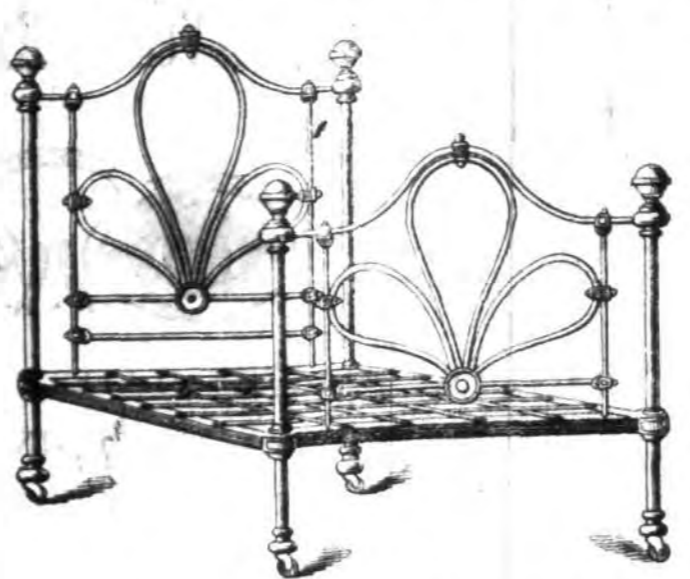
Gallery Audiences. "Gallery audiences," said a veteran attaché of one of Philadelphia's theaters recently, "are made up of some of the most intelligent playgoers in the city. Young men of moderate incomes prevail, but often wealthy youths gazing at the gods, as their elevated station affords in many respects the most advantageous place from which to view the stage. The receipts from the gallery, moreover, are a very important item, and the people in it do good work in leading the applause. Edwin Booth always begins an after the play speech by gazing up at the gallery in recognition of its enthusiasm in greeting him."

"Lawrence Barrett was always popular with the gods in Philadelphia, and he used to say that his applause was as refreshing drink to him. For the most part the gallery audiences were well behaved, critical and intelligent, and for myself I should feel sorry to see them relegated, in this city anyhow, to the 'pit,' as the English call the parquette."—Philadelphia Press.

The Mandolin. The stringed musical instrument which is peculiarly suited to ladies is the mandolin. It comes from Italy and was introduced here by the Spanish students, who made so great a success at Booth's theater so many years ago. Mrs. William Wagner Astor was one of the first ladies to learn to play the mandolin; her ability, however, with this instrument was not made known to any extent outside of her home circle.—New York Press.

A Last Definition. A Boston editor, asked to define the difference between a split and a tad, rose to the emergency in this manner: "A 'tad' is anything that arouses evanescent mentality, while a 'split' is anything that inspires permanent mentality."—Philadelphia Ledger.

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A Terrible Story of the Frightful Destruction of a Whole Race, the Inhabitants of One Island—Even Today the Spot Is Said to Be Haunted.

A friend of mine made a prolonged tour of Scotland last year to indulge in his favorite pastime—fishing—of which there is none better in the whole world than among the highlands and contiguous islands of that country. He brought back with him a vast storehouse of the strange tales of the primitive people among whom he sojourned, for he avoided the usual lines of travel, confining his wanderings to the remote villages and out of the way places which the ordinary tourist never visits. He lived for months with the peasant and fisherman class, with whom, ingratiating himself into their good graces, he learned much of the traditions current in the region, which have only been kept alive by being handed down from father to son through the generations.

At one time residing with a simple fisherman on one of the Hebrides, that group made famous by the celebrated tour of Dr. Johnson and Boswell, he was told a strange story pertaining to a cave on one of the islands, which he afterward visited with his host, making the weird tradition doubly interesting. It was this:

More than three centuries ago there existed two clans between which there had waged the most bitter and relentless warfare for generations. Of course the people of both factions were but little more civilized than the North American Indians when Columbus gave a new world to Spain. Both clans lived by stealing from their neighbors, decidedly preferring this mode of life to an honest endeavor of raising anything for themselves. Their tenure of the dark glens which they claimed was held by the prowess of their primitive bows and arrows, their rude claymores and ruder spears, ligaments, cruel and vindictive, the several clans hated each other with a hatred unknown but to dense ignorance; they hated simply because their names differed, because they had been taught that differences between names meant feuds between races.

One of these two contending clans lived on one of the little islands of the Hebridean group, a barren, rocky, desolate surf, surrounded only by the eternal surf. All winter day came the boats of their hated enemy. The intention of the invaders was of course to kill, plunder and destroy. They did plunder and burn the huts they found on the shore, but not a human being was found that they could massacre. The whole island appeared to have been abandoned. The invaders ransacked it well; traversed every glen and every ravine and wondered where their inveterate enemies had gone. Failing in the principal part of their bloody mission, they prepared to leave. They took up their oars, but hardly had they cleared the little creek by which they had entered from the sea when a man, with an apparently extraordinary vision, spied a figure in the uncertain light of a winter's dawn cautiously moving over the rocks.

A shout announced the discovery, and the island disappeared. But the secret had been betrayed. The inhabitants had hidden themselves, not deserted. In half an hour their assailants had reloaded and set themselves with augmented hope to the search. Snow had fallen during the night, and the foot-prints of the imprudent intruder betrayed the whereabouts of his clan. The highlanders excitedly followed the trail of the enemy, and they soon tracked him to the hiding place of his people, a curious cavern, its entrance through the mazes of rock, overgrown with thick shrubs, a place easily missed by any one not familiar with the locality. In this cave were gathered all the families of the tribe, the women and little children and a few of the old men, the main portion of the young warriors having gone off on an excursion—a marauding one of course—to the neighboring islands.

With shouts of triumph and exulting war companions to the cruel nature of invaders they collected seaweed, brimwood and the dried heath, in which the rocks abounded, and piled around the entrance to the cavern, its inmates, now equipped with what their enemies were doing, maintaining the silence of despair. A few words of muttered Gaelic alone passed—and in a short time the material which the savages had gathered was well piled up, the scorching heat from which and the dense smoke rolled in upon the unfortunate occupants of the cavern, when suddenly there arose a wall of agony. Over the cracking and roaring of the huge fire the dying wretches attempted to get out, only to be killed at the mouth of the fierce hell or thrust back with pikes into the scorching flames. At last all sounds ceased—the blaze sank and died away completely; the fiends had done their work; not a living creature remained within the almost red-hot cavern. The clan had been extinguished—a clan less in the highlands of Scotland. The triumphant murderers took to their boats and sailed away again, leaving their dead unburied as they lay.

They never were buried through all the long years. The little island where such atrocities were committed was accursed—haunted by spirits of those who had met their horrible fate there. It was also claimed by the fishermen of the other islands that whenever they happened to pass that way in the night low wallings were distinctly heard, sharp, piercing shrieks, and that ghastly skeletons were seen walking on the beach, and the place was avoided as a pest hole. After many generations these superstitious notions died out. Now the island is inhabited again, but the dread of legends sticks to it, and it is said that many a human bone is dug up by the small gardeners.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

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